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A Case Report

MEDLINE: Information Resource for Patient Care

NLM News readers might be interested in the following account of an incident involving MEDLINE. The information was provided by Lee Strauss, a public affairs consultant to Overlook Hospital in Summit, New Jersey. Overlook, a 543-bed community teaching hospital, has been a member of NLM's online network since November 1978.

A 27-year old man was brought to the hospital unable to walk, his legs almost completely paralyzed. The man told examining physicians that he had been getting progressively weaker for months and was no longer able to work, to leave his room, or to move without clinging to furniture for support. He had not seen a doctor because, he said, he was afraid of what he might learn.

A hematologist's examination showed that the patient had a hereditary blood disorder called thalessemia, a rare form of anemia. Additional diagnostic testing and examination by a neurologist disclosed that the patient was suffering from advanced spinal cord compression. A sizable mass pressing on the spine was causing paralysis. A neurosurgeon was consulted about the advisability of surgery.

The complexities of this rare combination of conditions were outside the experience of Overlook Hospital's staff. There were several critical questions: Were the two abnormal conditions related? Was surgical removal of the mass the best solution to the problem? With the patient's severe blood condition the possibility of complications made surgery risky; could he tolerate it? In sum: what treatment was least dangerous for the patient and most likely to relieve the paralysis?

Kathy Moeller, the medical librarian at Overlook Hospital, was asked to do an immediate MEDLINE search for references relating to Thalessemia in conjunction with spinal cord compression. One reference was retrieved. The journal, fortunately, was in the hospital's own collection and, within minutes, the article was in the hands of the physician.

The article noted that only eight cases of Thalessemia and spinal cord compression had been reported in the literature. In all eight cases, surgery or autopsy had proved a definite connection between the two conditions. Most important, experience in those eight cases had shown that abnormal blood-forming tissue, rather than a tumor, was the cause of pressure on the spine and the resulting paralysis. The treatment promising the best hope was radiotherapy.

Overlook's radiologists were consulted and a course of treatment was prescribed and begun without delay. Results were dramatic. Within days the abnormal mass was dissolved. The patient, though still weak, was able to walk again. His recovery was so swift that he was discharged from the hospital two weeks later. Now under a doctor's care, he is being treated for the blood disorder.

The National Library of Medicine would like to thank the staff at Overlook Hospital for bringing this to our attention. In recent years the Library has attempted to increase the number of hospitals in the online network. Overlook Hospital's successful use of MEDLINE to assist physicians in making medical decisions confirms that a computerized literature retrieval system can

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NEWS

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have a valuable role in patient care. We would be interested to learn of other applications of NLM's online data bases in the health care setting. Communications may be addressed to Robert B. Mehnert, Chief of the Library's Office of Inquiries and Publications Management.

NIH Consensus Development Conferences

Summaries of two recent NIH Consensus Development Conferences will be mailed to *News* readers in October. These summaries (published by the Office for Medical Applications of Research, Room 216, Building 1, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland 20205) cover the following conferences held in September:

- *Intraocular Lens Implantation* (sponsored by the National Eye Institute)
- *Estrogen Use and Postmenopausal Women* (sponsored by the National Institute on Aging)

Summaries of the following conferences, to be held in October, will be sent in November:

- *Amantadine in the Prevention and Treatment of Influenza* (sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases)
- *The Use of Microprocessor-based 'Intelligent' Machines in Patient Care* (sponsored by the Division of Research Services)

Cooperation in Technical Processing

The National Library of Medicine and the Library of Congress have continued their series of meetings as first reported in the *NLM News*, June 1979. The first of these meetings, initiated by the Medical Library Association, attempted to identify areas of concern that required close coordination between LC and NLM. After the first session it became apparent that a rational approach to reconciling the varying practices of the national libraries meant that the National Agricultural Library should participate, and NAL was invited to the meetings on July 13 at LC and on September 21 at NLM. The three U.S. national libraries have committed themselves to resolving wasteful differences, promoting beneficial cooperation, and working toward better communication in the area of technical processing.

The principal topic of discussion at the July 13 meeting was how to cooperate in building an online name authorities data base. This is viewed as the first order of business, since standardization of bibliographic description must be preceded by the existence of a common authorities file. LC representatives described in some detail the cooperative authorities projects LC is currently engaged in with the Government Printing Office (covering Federal corporate bodies and personal names), the Texas State Library (Texas state government bodies), and Northwestern University (Africana). The most noteworthy accomplishment of the meeting was that the three libraries agreed to participate in long-range plans to develop a national online authorities data base. The three national libraries formed a working group to plan their concerted efforts on name authorities; its first meeting was on September 11.

The principle topic of discussion at the September 21 meeting was the problem of overlapping acquisitions in various subjects. Both NLM and NAL are carrying out comparison studies in collection development to define overlap areas with LC. Also planned are discussions of potential assistance by LC to other national libraries to catalog materials in certain languages. NLM and NAL will provide the Library of Congress with a list of the languages in which they need assistance. They will also designate the level of catal-

oging that would be satisfactory for each language.

The Medical Library Association was represented in these meetings by Nina Matheson.

CATLINE Monograph Records Available in OCLC

OCLC, Inc., one of the largest bibliographic utilities for cooperative cataloging, has begun adding current CATLINE® monograph records to its online file. At this time, only current monograph records from the weekly CATLINE tapes are being entered. Incoming CATLINE records will not replace Library of Congress records for the same work, but incoming Library of Congress records will replace existing CATLINE records. Thus, some duplicate LC and NLM records may appear in the online data base, and some CATLINE records may be superseded by LC records.

Specific questions on the procedures for using NLM records should be referred directly to OCLC, Inc., 1125 Kinnear Road, Columbus, OH 43212.

NLM in the Literature

The following citations were retrieved from the August/September MEDLINE file. They point to recent articles in which the National Library of Medicine (or its products and services) is discussed.

Burrows S, Kyle S: Searching the MEDLARS file on NLM and BRS a comparative study. Bull Med Libr Assoc 67(1):15–24, Jan 79

A comparison of the MEDLARS data base as it is currently available from the National Library of Medicine and Bibliographic Retrieval Services (BRS), Inc., is presented in chart format, and some major capability differences between the two systems are highlighted. The information included justifies the dual availability of the data base in health sciences libraries. This paper is intended for searchers and others familiar with one or both systems. Administrators considering the acquisition of the BRS system may find the study useful.

Day RA, Bowden VM, Kronick DA: Comparison of holdings of NLM (CATLINE) with those of resource libraries. Bull Med Libr Assoc 67(1):25–30, Jan 79

The collection development practices of the National Library of Medicine (NLM), with the goal of comprehensive acquisition of biomedical monographs, are compared with those of the resource libraries of the TALON (Region IX) Regional Medical Library. Holdings of two resource libraries in the TALON region, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, and of the TALON Union Catalog of Monographs were compared with the NLM CATLINE data base for four subject classes and selected imprint years. Foreign-language coverage is lacking in Region IX, with English-language coverage is lacking in Region IX, with English-language coverage ranging between 70 and 88% of titles listed in CATLINE. Absent English-language material tends to be ephemeral or otherwise out of scope for the resource libraries. Between 7.1 and 18.8% of monographs acquired in each subject class by the two recource libraries are lacking in CATLINE; this represents between 2 and 8% of the CATLINE titles for each class.

Lorent JP: Online literature retrieval in poison control. Clin Toxicol 14(1):113–22, 1979

Modern bibliographic databases include an increasing number of substantial abstracts, as well as other features which contribute to their becoming useful additional tools in poison control. This paper is a contribution to the assessment of their respective value in providing rapid and up-to-date information about toxic effects of drugs and chemicals, as well as about the therapy of poisoning. The main systems compared are Excerpta Medica, Scisearch, and Toxline.

Werner G: Use of on-line bibliographic retrieval services in health sciences libraries in the United States and Canada. Bull Med Libr Assoc 67(1):1–14, Jan 79

This paper reports the major findings of a questionnaire sent to the 708 U. S. and Canadian institutions which were using the National Library of Medicine's search services as of November 1977.

Personnel Notes

Gains

- Robin R. Chivers, Ph.D., Special Expert, Medical Subject Headings
- Williamina A. Himwich, Ph.D., Special Expert, Specialized Information Services
- Maureen D. Laibson, Personnel Assistant, Office of Personnel Management
- Pham Duc Mau, Special Expert, Lister Hill Center
- Biagio J. Melloni, Special Expert, National Medical Audiovisual Center
- Donna B. Pratt, Personnel Assistant, Office of Personnel Management
- Medi Rashidian, Electronics Engineer, Lister Hill Center
- Charles A. Sneiderman, M.D., Ph.D., Research Medical Officer, Lister Hill Center
- Surachai Suthasinekul, Ph.D., Special Expert, Lister Hill Center

Losses

- Mary Clampitt, Secretary, Specialized Information Services
- Diane M. Cross, Personnel Assistant, Office of Personnel Management
- Patricia R. Doherty, Clerk-typist, Reference Services Division
- Marguerite F. Kelly, Librarian, Technical Services Division
- Claire Marwick, Contract Specialist, Office of Contracts Management
- Gerald Miller, Electronics Engineer, Lister Hill Center

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- Herbert J. Naylor, Jr., Technical Information Specialist, Bibliographic Services Division
- Masako K. Orlando, Librarian, Technical Services Division
- Nancy A. Park, Clerk, Bibliographic Services Division
- John Walden, Computer Specialist, Office of Computer and Communications Systems
- Stephen F. Yanek, Mathematician, Lister Hill Center

Serial Gap List

NLM is solicting the help of the medical library community in filling gaps in our serial collections. If you can provide any of these items we would be most grateful. Please address them to:

National Library of Medicine
TSD-GAPS
Bethesda, Maryland 20209

Cardiology Digest 1: 1, 2, 5, 7, 1966; 2: 1-3, 9-12, 1967; 3: 2, 5, 10, 1968; 6: 6, 1971; 7: 1, 1972; 8: 1-11, 1973; 9: 1-12, 1974

Journal of the Tennessee Medical Association 71: 6, 1978

Maternal and Child Health 3: 4-10, 197-; 4: 5, 9, 197-; 6: 2-12, 1973

Michigan Nurse 40: 2, 1967; 43: 1, 1970; 44: 2, 7, 8, 1971; 45: 3, 5-7, 1972; 46: 3, 1973; 47: 4, 5, 7, 8, 1974; 48: Oct. 1975; 50: 10-12, 1977; 51: 1-3, 5,8, 1978

Microscopic Reports 15: 1-4, 1963; 16: 1-4, 1965; 18: 1-4, 1966; 19: 1-4, 1967; 20: 1, 1968; 21: 1, 1969

Milwaukee Medical Society Times 39: 5, 1966; 42: 3, 1969; 43: 3, 1970; 44: 3, 1971; 45: 1-9, 12, 1972; 46: Oct. 1973

National Drug Reporter 3: 21-24, 1974; 6: 2, 4, 12, 1976; 8: 3-11, 1978

National Safety News 100: 1, 2, 1969; 108: 4, 1973; 109: 2-6, 11, 1974; 110: 106, 1974; 111: 1-10, 1975

New York State Journal of Optometry 1: 1-3, 5, 6, 1975; 2: 1-5, 1976; 4: 3-6

New York University Medical Quarterly 16: 3, 1961; 17: 1, 1961; 18: 4, 1963; 20: 4, 1965; 21: 1-4; 22: 1, 1966; 24: 1, 1968; 27: 1, 4, 1972; 28: 1-4, 1973; 30: 4, 1975; 31: 1, 4, 1976; 32: 1, 4, 1977; 34: 3, 4, 1978

Northwest Health Team Approach 2: 9, 10, 1975; 4: 10-12, 1977

Notes on Respiratory Diseases 3: 2, 1963; Summer, Winter, 1967; Summer 1971

Nursing Care 7: 6, 8, 9, 12, 1977; 10: 6, 12, 1977

Occupational Health Nursing 26: 7, 1978

Occupational Health and Safety 46: 1, 2, 1977; 47: 1, 1978

Ohio Nurses Review 40: 6, 1965; 41: 7, 8, 1966; 42: 4, 6, 1967; 43: 6, 1968; 45: 6, 1970; 47: 3-6, 1972; 50: 3, 1975; 51: 1, 5, 1976; 52: 4, 7, 1977

Perspective on Aging 4: 2, 4, 5, 1975; 5: 2, 1976; 6: 2-6, 1977

Pest Control 45: 1-7, 1977

Pharmaceutical Chemistry Journal 8: 8, 1974; 11: 5 pt. 2, 7 pt. 1, 12 pt. 2, 1977

Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the American Association of Equine Practitioners 13, 1967; 14, 1968; 15, 1969, 16, 1970; 17, 1971, 22, 1976

Proceedings—Nassau County Medical Center 3: 2, 1976; 4: 1, 2, 1977

Program Notes—Association of University Programs in Health Administration Nos. 50, 51, 54, 55, 1972; 73, 74, 1977

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